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ABSTRACT

A case study explored the implications for secondary school acting students in developing character in a role when the theater teacher assumes the role of actor in a student production. Two of Albuquerque, New Mexico's 11 public high schools co-produced "Romeo and Juliet." Pre- and posttests of student perceptions of acting and character development were conducted. Data also included audio and videotape; student, director, and researcher journals; surveys; student, parent, and staff evaluations; and "open forum" discussions. Results indicated: (1) no significant differences in student attitudes toward most of the internal and external aspects of character development; (2) significant changes in feeling toward emotional recall and character analysis; (3) students were unanimously positive in their responses to a teacher/artist being involved in a student production; (4) the student/teacher relationship was enhanced; (5) the open forums were an excellent method of helping to develop trust and respect among the members of the student company; and (6) the two-school approach did not seem as essential to the outcome of the project as originally thought because the training and experience of the students was so similar. (Contains 32 references, 2 appendixes of data, and a calendar of events.) (RS)

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# IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS ROLE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WHEN THE TEACHER BECOMES AN ACTOR IN THE PRODUCTION

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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## National Arts Education Research Center

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Currently, more than 60 practicing arts teachers from a variety of urban, suburban and rural classroom settings in more than 23 states across the country comprise the Center's network of teacher-researchers.

Jerrold Ross
Director

Ellyn Berk
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## Introductions

This project helps to affirm the work of other Center teacher-researchers in theatre education. In finding that students who participated in the study "...showed a much deeper, more concrete understanding of the various aspects of characterization and how to actually find the essence of a character..." the teacher discovered that young people are able to transcend the mechanics of acting, broadening their apprehension of characterization and, by this means, come to understand themselves and others more fully.

Thus acting becomes more than a vehicle for expression of an author's intent. It is a powerful instrument, enabling students to enter the real world, of real people, more fully through the world of the stage.

***Jerrold Ross***
Director of the Center

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
School of Education, Health,
Nursing, and Arts Professions
New York University

This project represents the collaboration of drama students in two Albuquerque high schools under the direction of Debbie Buckner, Center Drama Teacher Researcher and Ron Woods, drama teacher. The enthusiastic support of Jack Bobroff, Superintendent of Schools, was key to arranging the complex scheduling demands of the study. Throughout our meetings he remained stalwart in his support.

The two principals, Marilyn Zanetti at Sandia High School (the site of the research) and George Bello, at Albuquerque High School helped the impossible to happen. We are most grateful. A final thanks is owed to Ellen Dee Foster, who remained a source of inspiration and information for Debi in Albuquerque

***Ellyn Berk***
Deputy Director of the Center

## Acknowledgments

A research project requires the help, expertise, and guidance of many. Without the support and assistance of the following people, this project would simply not have been possible. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

First and foremost, my most heartfelt thanks goes to Ellen Dee Foster, coordinator of Language Arts at Albuquerque Public Schools. A mentor and a friend, Dee was instrumental in making me aware of and helping me be accepted to participate in the National Arts Education Research Center. Dee has always provided me with a plethora of information essential to my project. and was always there even if all I needed was a sympathetic ear.

Another friend and colleague, Ron Woods, was an essential element of the project. Ron directed the production of *Romeo and Juliet* from which this project emerged. Ron's undying dedication to the show. his endless hours of work and his perspectives and insights gave me the inspiration I often needed to continue. And his talents as director make the production an incredible success.

Deepest gratitude, too, to Dr. Ellyn Berk, Deputy Director of the National Arts Education Research Center. Ellyn was key to teaching me how to approach the project in the first place as well as helping me to know what contacts to make and where to go for help. Thanks to her for her recommendations, works of support and for her friendship.

Additionally, I would like to thank:

Marilyn Zanetti, Principal of Sandia High School
George Bello, Principal of Albuquerque High School
Dale Kempter, Coordinator of Fine Arts at the Albuquerque Public Schools
Jack Bobroff, Superintendent of Albuquerque Public Schools

for their support and assistance. Because of them, we have schools and a school system which encourages such projects and provides a setting conducive to the success of such projects.

The media coverage which the project received from various sources in Albuquerque exceeded what I ever could have hoped. I would especially like to thank David Steinberg of the Albuquerque Journal and Crystal McClernon of the APS Perspective for the interest and time spent in interviews and photo sessions.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank the cast and crew of *Romeo and Juliet* and their families. For three months, these students were immersed in this play and the research surrounding it--three months that included hours upon hours of rehearsals, interviews, journal writing and discussion which took them away from their families and friends. I deeply appreciate their hard work and dedication--and their love.

***Debi Buckner***

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# BACKGROUND

## Statement of Investigation

The research presented here is a case study which explores the implications for secondary school acting students in developing character in a role when the theatre teacher assumes the role of actor in a student production. The researcher in this project is the teacher/artist, who becomes a kind of "artist-in-residence", if you will, with the additional insights of formal teacher training, a true interest in teaching, and prior knowledge of the students' skills and abilities. This project is based upon a student production of *Romeo and Juliet* in which the researcher plays the role of Juliet's nurse. This role was chosen because the character comes into contact with the greatest number of student actors. The production was also a co- production between the researcher's school and another city school. This approach was taken to provide the researcher with a control group and an outside group. The production was directed by the director of the other city school whose training, experience, and methods are quite similar to those of the researching instructor. In this way, the instructor's research was not adversely affected by also having to assume the role of director, and at the same time students did not have to adjust to a totally unfamiliar directing method.

## Need for Study

It is generally believed that adolescents accept much more readily what is taught if they know and see that their instructor practices what the student is asked to do. Therefore, it becomes essential that the performing arts instructor actually perform on occasion. Certainly, the teacher can perform in professional or community public performances with other adults, however, performing alongside students in a student production, allowing the students to observe and participate in the process of developing character from beginning to end gives the student a whole new perspective on the instructor and the art of acting alike.

Teacher/artists performing with their students is widely practiced, sometimes in a formal setting such as a scheduled major production sometimes, merely in classroom exercises on a daily or weekly basis. However, the process hasn't been fully studied and documented. This strictly was designed to see if and to what extent this method of teaching role development could prove beneficial to young actors.

## Related Literature

This method of teaching and learning could possibly be likened to a mentor/protégé or master/apprentice approach. In her book, *Mentors and*

*Protégés*, Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones defines mentor in this way: "The key is that the mentor has skills, knowledge or power that the protégé doesn't have but needs. "1 She goes on to say, "It's always interesting to watch how other people handle situations that have baffled us or that may be looming in our futures. What fascinates us is exactly how they do it and what happens as a result of their actions. Depending on the results, we may decide to copy their behavior we may reject it, or we might come up with a compromise that uses their method as a base into which we can blend our own ideas."2

Many artists in many fields have admitted to having had mentors who taught them skills and practices which helped them to achieve great success. George C. Scott, when asked if he tried to model himself after any other actor, said, "You develop your own technique, your own style and so forth, and yet there's really no other place to learn except those who've gone before you."3 Countless other actors quoted in such books as Funke's *Actors Talk About the Theatre* and Cole and Chinoy's *Actors on Acting* discuss the fact that there was always someone with whom they worked or someone they watched work from whom they learned a great deal about their craft--either directly or indirectly. Even Lawrence Olivier said, "...Alfred Lunt taught me an enormous amount by watching him, in the field of really naturalistic acting; he had astonishing gifts. . . I watch Rex Harrison for timing. I watch all my colleagues for different qualities that I admire, and I imitate them and copy them unashamedly."4

Certainly, many professional actors will not unabashedly admit to imitating or copying, but will refer to the process as "being influenced by". Whatever the terminology employed, the fact remains that all of us find role models, and we learn by imitation.

In their first book *Social Learning and Imitation* (1941), Miller and Dollard state that "in a great many situations people solve problems, not by trying one response after another until one is rewarded, but by doing what they see someone else doing."5 This method of learning, however, has been admonished repeatedly by other social and educational psychologists stating that learning by imitation produces only those who have learned to imitate, not think for themselves. Those who imitate also may have a great deal of difficulty in deciding who to imitate.6 Years later, Albert Bandura and Richard Walters collaborated on a book which furthers the idea of learning by imitation. A part of their idea was that, "a person can learn how to perform some fairly elaborate sequence of operations by observing someone else doing it and then modeling his own behavior after what he has learned."7

In this study students observed the teacher/artist's method of character development and copied, in some very technical ways (i.e., written analysis, choosing action, motivation, concentration, focus), the actions of the instructor. However, the fact remains that the teacher/artist was playing one character and the students each were playing another, and there was no possibility of exact imitation. The students had to develop their own thoughts and ideas about their own characters. In this way, a students is learning a

"formula" if you will, and must apply or transfer this knowledge to another situation. In addition, through the teacher/artist's performance, the student has a very clear demonstration of how this formula works.

# DESIGN OF STUDY

## Setting

The setting of this study was Albuquerque, New Mexico, it included two of the city's eleven public high schools. the schools involved are relatively dissimilar in makeup both in terms of geographic location and in terms of student population and community environment. In spite of these differences, the drama departments are surprisingly similar in terms of student expectation and plays produced. this is at least in part due to the similarity in training, methodology and experience of the two instructors involved. All students involved in this project regardless of their school base have basically similar backgrounds in theatre.

Sandia High School, home base of the teacher/artist and researcher of this project, is a four-year public high school located in a middle to upper-middle class residential are of the city. The faculty, staff, student population and surrounding community is predominantly white. Parents of students attending Sandia are often highly educated professionals who are traditionally quite involved in the education of their children. Almost 90% of all Sandia graduates continue on to college and the dropout rate is only about 3%. Total student population is about 1650 and the faculty numbers about 120.

The Drama Department at Sandia includes approximately 200 students who take classes, perform in productions, work technically on productions or in some way contribute to the various projects sponsored by the department. The department enjoys a great deal of support from students, faculty and community alike in large part because these are people who know live theatre as an important form of entertainment. Also, the school has enjoyed more than twenty years of traditionally good quality theatrical training and production. Finally, the administration is highly supportive of the arts in education and shows this support both financially and in their attendance of performances.

The second school involved in this study was Albuquerque High School, the home base of the director of the production. This school is located in a part-commercial, part-residential area of the city, and its community and school population is highly diverse. Considered to be an inner-city school, Albuquerque High's student population comes from some of the poorest neighborhoods in the city, but the school's students also include representatives from university professors. The faculty, staff, and student population are predominantly Hispanic, but also include whites, Asians, and the highest black population in the city. This diversity of culture presented problems, but students and staff alike believe that the benefits of such a cultural mix far outweigh the problems.

The atmosphere at Albuquerque High is also conducive to the arts and artistic endeavor, again spurred on by an extremely supportive

administration. Albuquerque High also enjoys high numbers of student involvement on its drama classes and in all aspects of its productions. The only real difference evident on the two schools in terms of support and involvement is in the way of community involvement. The community and to some degree the students outside the department are not as supportive as at Sandia. The majority of the community simply does not consider live theatre as a part of its leisure time activity. Also, there is traditionally less respect for and interest in formal education among a majority of the school community. Approximately 59% of Albuquerque High students go on to college, and the dropout rate sits at about 11%.

An additional note must be added concerning the atmosphere surrounding this project as it involves these two schools. Sandia and Albuquerque High have collaborated on another production in the past, and the collaboration was highly successful. This has created good will and a certain amount or respect and admiration from each department for the other. However, only two of the students participating in this production were also a part of the previous one.

## Documentation

The data from this project was collected and analyzed in many and varied forms: audio tape; video tape; student, director and researcher journals; a pre- and post-test; surveys; student, parent and staff evaluations; and "open forum" discussion sessions. Students involved in the production included a cast of thirty-three and a crew of approximately thirty. Nineteen of the cast members, including Romeo and almost all major male roles were played by Sandia students. Fourteen cast members including Juliet and all major female roles except the Nurse were played by Albuquerque High students. No conscious effort was make to construct the cast in this manner. It was simply a matter of availability and interest of students, combinations and chemistry during the casting, and the composition of each school's Drama Department. Parents, research primarily through their evaluative efforts post-production, however, a few affiliated with both schools provided hands-on assistance with crew work.

## Methodology

The pre-/post-test used was a simple, straight-forward assessment of student perceptions of acting and character development. Included was a Likert scale in which students were to rate the importance of such internal elements of character development as: concentration, focus, relationship, action, choice, subtext and emotional and sensory recall, and such external elements of character development as: character analysis, costuming, makeup, scenery, line memorization, and projection. Also included in this pre-/post-test were short answer essay questions that concerned preparation for both audition and for rehearsal, description of the "job" of the actor, and a description of student's most and least successful roles.

There were two surveys used in this project. One of the surveys was given to the students at the very beginning stages of the project. Questions explored student attitudes concerning teachers in general, and their drama teacher in particular. In that the survey was given to the entire company, survey answers concerned teachers from both schools. About halfway through the ten-week rehearsal schedule, a survey was given to the parents of all cast members. These parents were asked to discuss their observations concerning their child's participation in this production. Questions involving such aspects as commitment to the project, seriousness of approach and attitude toward the researcher's involvement as actor were included. In addition, general or miscellaneous comments were requested.

From the very beginnings of rehearsals, students, director and researcher kept written journals. The student journals were to include their step-by-step approach to developing their own character (including written character analysis) and what, if anything, they learned from watching other's work, and especially what they were learning from watching the teacher/artist work. Entries were to be done on a frequent basis, daily, if possible. The director's journal was to include his observations of the student actor's progress in terms of characterizations and what , specifically, he had observed that they had gained from working from the teacher/artist. The teacher/artist's journal was kept on a daily basis and recorded observations of all involved. Many aspects of the process were observed, i.e., actor to actor relationships, creation of ensemble, individual gains or losses in character development, individual methods of character development, actor-director relationships and patterns of growth of the production as a whole. A problem arose in this journal-keeping method of obtaining information, in that students found difficulty in writing as frequently as had been requested. almost everyone handed one in at some point, but there were a few who never did one at all. All journals were collected approximately once every two weeks.

Video-taped documentation began with auditions and continued at regular intervals throughout the rehearsal process. An attempt was made to capture the significant rehearsal periods (blocking, working, first run-throughs, polishing, and technical rehearsals), in an effort to track character development at those times. Also included in the video-taped documentation is the final "open forum" discussion and all seven nights of performance.

The open forum discussion sessions were held on a weekly basis, usually late in the week. They lasted between two and three hours and were always held in lieu of rehearsal. The entire cast was required to attend and encouraged to participate as much as possible. These general discussion sessions were held in an informal setting (on the floor on the stage, and usually in a circle), and they avoided as much as possible the formal "teacher-student" classroom situation. Each session was opened with a question or observation of a very general nature, such as "What do you think was the most important thing you learned about your character this week?" Either the director or the teacher/artist would begin the discussion, but neither would be a designated

leader. Gentle guidance was needed occasionally to focus the discussion, but generally, the student cast members kept the discussion flowing at a fairly steady pace. Cast members were encouraged to discuss openly freely and as honestly as possible. Sessions concerned such matters as concentration, character relationships and backgrounds, historical background of the play, actor relationships, differences in approach of character development, and even delved into such things as company misunderstandings and problems, and misconceptions about each other and each others' schools. Sessions began with students feeling somewhat guarded and tentative, but as they grew to know each other, almost everyone felt comfortable speaking his mind. The open forums were by far the most valuable means of gathering insightful and valuable information for this project.

Finally, evaluations of the production and the project were taken from informal interviews with parents, faculty and administration, and from informal and formal interviews with student audience members. These interviews concerned questions such as how the production compared to those they had previously experienced, what growth, or change, if any, they had noticed in the actors that they knew, and how they felt about a teacher being involved as an actor in a student production. Company members were asked to compare this production with others in which they had participated, and to express what they felt they had learned from the production, in general, and from working with the teacher/artist, specifically. Cast members participated in a final open forum and wrote final evaluations in their journals.

# RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

## Analysis of Data

*Romeo and Juliet* was chosen as the basis of this project for a number of reasons. The play itself is full of rich and complex characterizations which present great challenges to all actors. The content is timely to all generations, but especially to adolescents who are first experiencing idealized love, and first sensing and reacting to the injustices of prejudice, misunderstanding and distrust. Additionally, this play, as any Shakespearean work, presents challenges in style and language necessary to the experience of a high school aged actor, and appropriate to a mentor/protégé-type learning experience, such as this project represents. Taking this into account, understandably students were strongly committed to this production from the very outset and gave priority time to it throughout the three-month duration of the process.
(See rehearsal schedule)

Auditions were announced six weeks prior to the actual audition dates. students were not required to audition, however. Most "...just wanted to be a part of it" as many journals attested. Over sixty students auditioned for the thirty two speaking and non-speaking roles which were available to them. Few of the female students were resentful of the fact that one of the major women's roles was being taken by the teacher/artist. The few who were concerned were students from the director's school and had no prior contact with the teacher/artist. Parents, faculty and staff alike were highly supportive of the project and the production. All parents had been informed of the project and its implications at an open house meeting at the beginning of the school year.

Auditions proved to be intense and grueling. Each student was to prepare and audition scene or monologue from the play. All students came to the audition extremely well-prepared, in fact, many had prepared much more material than was required of them. There were obvious beginnings of characterization even at that point. Students had worked hard on these auditions, using class time, lunch and after school hours to prepare. Journal entries from this period of the production process included the following:

from the director:

> "Although I was well aware of everyone's hard work preparing for the auditions, I did not anticipate on glowing audition after another."

from the researcher:

> "...most seemed to have a real sense of character...[and] many different interpretations of all characters surfaced."

and from the student who eventually played Romeo:

> "I've never worked so hard in my life, and I like it. It feels good!"

In order to determine how well students could handle the language and style of the play in a cold reading situation, the director gave the students unprepared scenes to read during the call-back auditions. The majority of the students had a great deal more difficulty grasping meanings and developing an interpretation. Very little character was evident. During these auditions, the teacher/artist was asked to read with some of the students in an effort to demonstrate how a character could be developed, even slightly, and how language could be interpreted even in a cold reading. The students with whom the teacher/artist read found themselves able to five more in these readings because, as they said, "She gave me so much more to react to." Other auditioners who watched but did not participate seemed receptive, but slightly skeptical and somewhat intimidated. Casting was completed and announced on the evening of the call-back auditions. (See cast breakdown).

The characterization pre-test was given to students in the cast during the first rehearsal. Results of the test showed that the experienced actors repeated almost verbatim what they had been taught in previous acting classes. The internal aspects of character development (i.e. concentration, focus, relationship, motivation, sensory recall, intention, subtext action choice, etc.) were deemed most important in most cases, with external aspects (i.e. costume, make-up, scenery, written analysis, gesture, etc.) had less significance according to their answers. Exceptions to this were projection, physical movement and voice, which were among the five that the students considered to be the most important. The inexperienced actors tended toward a lack of knowledge of most of the terminology, and what answers were provided by them did not seem to follow any pattern.

Upon observing the student actors through the first week or two of rehearsal, much of what they said they knew how to do and practiced regularly was not apparent. Their characters seemed shallow and lifeless. In fact, upon listening in open forum discussions many of the aspects of character development which are considered internal seemed quite abstract and foreign to even the most experienced of the students. They knew the words and what they were supposed to mean, but as the student playing the Prince plainly stated, "I don't know how to get there (to the essence of his character). Acting is so vague and abstract." The girl playing Juliet responded in kind saying, "My greatest fear is that I'm not thinking of my character at all. I don't feel like I'm doing anything--or hardly anything." And about the boy playing Romeo, the director had this to say," [His] delivery was very surface, lacking insight and credibility." The "how" was still elusive. When asked what they had noticed the teacher/artist doing, comments seemed surface and general: "She's fun to watch." and "She does different stuff." Suggestions were made that the students watch more closely and carefully.

From about the third to the seventh week of rehearsal, a great deal of growth was noted in the character development abilities of the student actors, especially those who had scenes with the teacher/artist. Those students

seemed more inclined to question and comment on what they had observed and seemed more receptive to suggestion by teacher/artist and director alike. These students made reference consistently to things that they were doing or feeling that they never had before. And, interestingly, those who had scenes with the teacher/artist seemed to transfer what they learned from those scenes with other actors and to monologues and soliloquies. The director states at this point that:

> "There is no question that [teacher/artist's] presence on-stage has had a creative impact on the kids. I often wonder if they are as aware of this as I am. On the one hand, I've watched as the kids in the audience react to her acting with awe. At the same time I see her fellow actors focusing of rising to her levels of preparedness, delivery, exploration, listening and responsiveness. The beauty of this is that several have actually adopted this form of rehearsing, carrying from scenes with [the teacher/artist] to scenes with other actors."

And some students became very aware that they were learning:

> Juliet: "I mean I must be learning. It's so natural for me to do those scenes with [the teacher/artist] because of [her] reactions. I mean there's so much eye-contact. It's so easy."
>
> Balthasar: "...like physically just with all her actions and stuff...even though we're only dancing and there's a crowd of people around and she's got her back to the audience, she's still got these expressions of the nurse on her face. It makes it easier for me and I learn from that. She's in character at all times. It just seemed deeper you know."

About week five, open forum discussion sessions began to include questioning of the teacher/artist on her methods of developing varying physical and vocal qualities, attempting varying motivations, writing all new character discoveries in an ongoing analysis, and focusing on character throughout rehearsal whether on or off stage. One open forum session focused entirely upon personalities, backgrounds of and relationships between all characters in the show. Even townspeople with no lines had created names backgrounds and in what way they were related to the feuding families. From the researcher's [teacher/artist] journal:

> "What an absolutely wonderful experience...amazing how interested they were in discussing all the implications of historical background and it's influences on the play and its characters."

This knowledge was due in great part to a rehearsal during the fifth week which was devoted entirely to the townspeople in which through improvisational games and discussion, discoveries were made by each chorus member, townsperson and servant. Concerning this rehearsal the director commented:

> "What occurred was riveting. I was amazed with the thought and knowledge represented among the group. I was thrilled at hearing that not only did each person have a name, but that each had a history and/or some relation to the others. It was a delightful revelation."

During the eighth and ninth weeks of rehearsal, the students, and, as a result, the rehearsals seemed to reach a plateau in growth. Students seemed tired, bored with the routine and frustrated at the lack of any new developments. "I feel like I'm in a real rut. My character only has a certain range of emotions and I feel like I've explored them all," said the character who played the Prince. He seemed to sum up everyone's attitudes at this time. The teacher/artist agrees," Frustrations of an entire week of worry, deadlines, dealing with my own character, and the restlessness and boredom of students has taken it's toll and come to a head." Yet the director seemed to feel that many of the characters and the relationships were not yet fleshed out and complete: "A week out from opening and I don't like the way we look. I'm not even confident it will come together. I'm looking for every opportunity now to do in-depth character work." Tension mounted and tempers began to flare. One open forum session uncovered some pent up angers and rivalries between members of the cast and company and even some differing attitudes between members of the two schools. These differences almost consistently concerned seriousness of attitude and commitment to the production. At the end of the discussion, however, the students themselves had somehow turned the conversation around to a discussion of what significant contributions many of the cast and company members had made to the production, and almost everyone left inspired to work harder to overcome the frustrations.

As usual, performance brought heightened energy and increased concentration. Having an audience provided additional inspiration, for as many high school actors will readily admit, as they did in open forum discussions, "When I have an audience, I know it's all going to be worth it." Having audience feedback allowed many cast members to grow in their characters. As the director stated about the actress playing Juliet, "She was always growing, finding something new about her character. On closing night I was absolutely riveted." Juliet herself said, "All I could think about was that I had to concentrate. All I did was focus, intensify my energy and devote everything to my character. It was exactly what I have wanted for a performance."

The production was an enormous success from various standpoints. Audience reaction was one of awe and admiration. Comments were made by students, parents and school faculty and character." More importantly, however, the student actors in the cast were extremely proud of themselves. In general, they felt they had worked harder on this show than they had on a production before and, interestingly, by the end of the run, they were beginning to realize that what they felt about their own performances mattered more to them than what any audience member thought or did. "This is the first time I've been completely satisfied by the work I've done in a show," said the actor who played Mercutio, and from Tybalt, "every time I stepped on stage, a new feeling, different and exciting arose." Juliet's list of what she had learned included:

- Focus and concentration are the most vital aspects of acting.

- Becoming the character in thought, word and action is what makes a performance
- Listening and reacting, giving and getting energy are essential to character development

## Conclusion

The results of the post-test showed no significant difference in student attitudes toward most of the internal and external aspects of character development. There were, however, significant changes in feelings toward emotional recall and character analysis. In evaluating the production and individual performances during a final open forum discussion, students showed a much deeper more concrete understanding of the various aspects of characterization and how to actually find the essence of a character. Students had discovered the importance of a written analysis and an ongoing character as the post-test results would attest. The students had realized how important focus and concentration were as evident from their behavior backstage. And, most importantly, each had found a method that worked personally for developing character. Individual post-test answers, and journal entries had made reference to relying upon emotional or sensory recall, while others relied upon intensity of relationship with other characters and responded in direct proportion to what they were given. (See pre/post-test results).

### The Role of the Teacher-Artist

Often students of this age can understand abstract or vague ideas conceptually, but not to the degree they need to recreate the implied action on their own. When watching one of more experience complete the task, the student has much more concrete idea of what the concept means. This learning process, for this very reason, would be valid in a myriad of other academic situation.

In final written evaluations of the production and the research done, students were unanimously positive in their responses to a teacher/artist being involved in a student production. All agreed that learning about character development had taken place to some degree. Specifically mentioned were such elements as preparation, professionalism, energy, consistency, concentration, focus, intensity, responsiveness, and visualization. "Being on-stage with a professional [the teacher/artist], is the best experience. The incredible energy and character she gives on-stage were essential to my performances," says Juliet. The experienced student actors admitted that they had been taught different elements and aspects of character development before, but having seen a more experienced artist at work broadened their knowledge and enriched their experience. Says Tybalt, "I have learned so much about how to get into character and most of all how to play with it."

Additionally, the teacher/artist discovered a much clearer picture of the learning processes of the students involved.

> "I have great pride and respect for my students. Last week [week 9] I wasn't at all sure that the project had succeeded in the least. Come opening night, however, the seriousness of approach grew, the respect for each other increased ten-fold, and I saw work backstage as I had never imagined possible. All cast members, including those with the absolute smallest roles spent at least some time preparing for upcoming scenes. There was a professionalism about the performances that I had never seen before as a director."

and the director said:

> "...Perhaps the most remarkable thing of all was the change in student's performances during the run of the show. [Juliet] continued to amaze me to the very end...[Romeo] blossomed...he brought more depth and sensitivity to the character than I ever thought he would."

The student/teacher relationship enhancement was another very valuable product of this project. In a survey given to the student actors at the beginning of the rehearsal period almost all students stated that they did not really know their teachers and their teachers did not really know them. They did feel that they knew their drama teachers better than most, but that is understandable considering the hours of extracurricular contact. The teacher/artist noted a much greater willingness for students to approach and discuss even the most sensitive issues when in this situation. And after about three to four weeks into the rehearsal process, this openness included students with which the teacher/artist had no contact prior to the production.

**The Director Teacher-Artist**

Having an outside director for such a production is essential. The formality of the student/teacher relationship is much less likely to be a factor in the acceptance of the teacher/artist as a company member. In addition, the director can provide objective input as to what he or she observes the students learning. Finally, the director-teacher/artist combination can function much like any team-teaching situation. Each can be a sounding board for the other, each can provide support for the other, and each can learn a great deal from the other.

Open forum discussion sessions became one of the most important discoveries of this study. They had begun as simply a tool for character exploration, but grew into a device for the exploration of much, much more. The forums dealt with everything from what was originally intended, to solving company misunderstanding, explaining away misconception, and helping to solve actor conflicts. Open forums were and excellent method of helping to develop trust and respect among its individual members.

**The Two-School Approach**

The two-school approach did not seem as essential to the outcome of the project as thought, originally. The training and experience of the students from both schools was so similar that no significant difference was noted in their approach to character development or performance. Background and environment of students from each school was in many instances relatively dissimilar, however, this did not seem to affect their working relationships. Socially, perhaps, the group was never extremely cohesive, but some lasting friendships did form between members of the different schools.

As insignificant as the diversity between the two schools might have seemed in terms of character development, and performance, the two school approach was very significant in the matter of enabling students to become aware and to try to accept, to some degree, each others' cultural and environmental differences. Preconceptions and misunderstandings about each other and each others' schools were discussed and, according to some journal entries, were somewhat clarified. Logistically, this approach is problematic, but the benefits clearly outweigh any disadvantages. Students participate together toward a common goal instead of competing. Teachers can share ideas and methods, and come into contact with different types of students. And students have the opportunity to know and understand a different environment.

The situation and methods presented in this study are available to every teacher regardless of subject area or geographical location. Situations exist in which teachers can and should participate as fully as possible in an activity with their students. The more directly involved teachers can become in the students' educational activities, the better the relationships between teacher and student and the more willing and capable the students become.

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## Appendix A

### COMPANY BREAKDOWN PER SCHOOL

| | | Albuquerque High | Sandia |
|---|---|---|---|
| STAFF: | Director | 1 | 0 |
| | Assistant Director | 1 | 0 |
| | Stage Manager | 1 | 1 |
| | Fencing Instructors | ----No Affiliation---- | |
| | Set Designer | 1 | 0 |
| | Technical Director | 1 | 1 |
| CREWS: | | 24 | 44 |
| CAST: | | 13 (All major female roles except the nurse | 20 (All major men's roles) |

## Appendix B

### PRE-POST TEST RESULTS

Students were asked to rank the importance of these elements of characterization on the basis of the following scale:

5 - Extremely Important
4 - Very Important
3 - Important
2-Of Some Importance
1 - Not Important

| INTERNAL ASPECTS | PRE-TEST | POST-TEST |
|---|---|---|
| Relationship | 4.3 | 4.7 |
| Motivation | 4.4 | 4.7 |
| Concentration | 4.5 | 4.6 |
| Focus | 4.3 | 4.6 |
| Emotional Recall | 3.4 | 2.9 |
| Relaxation | 4.0 | 4.2 |
| Character Background | 3.2 | 3.9 |
| Sensory Recall | 3.3 | 3.4 |
| *Action | 3.8 | 3.7 |
| *Choice | 3.2 | 3.7 |
| *Subtext | 3.4 | 3.9 |
| *Intention | 3.7 | 4.3 |

| EXTERNAL ASPECTS | PRE-TEST | POST- TEST |
|---|---|---|
| Voice | 4.4 | 4.2 |
| Physical Movement | 4.0 | 4.3 |
| Facial Gestures | 3.8 | 4.3 |
| Hand Gestures | 3.7 | 3.6 |
| Costume | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Make-up | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| Memorization | 4.3 | 4.3 |
| Dialect | 3.4 | 3.3 |
| Props | 2.7 | 2.9 |
| Scenery | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| Improvisation | 3.5 | 3.3 |
| Pantomime | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| Stage Position | 3.6 | 3.3 |
| Projection | 4.5 | 4.7 |
| *Pacing | 3.6 | 3.6 |
| *Rhythm | 3.5 | 3.3 |

* Students who did not understand this terminology or how it related to character development did not provide a rating.

Appendix C

# March 1990

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6-9 P.M. OPEN FORUM<br>1 | 6-9 P.M. RUN ACTS III, IV, V<br>2 | 9 AM-4 PM TECH WORK TO FINISH SET (SHS)<br>3 | 4 |
| 5:30 FENCERS CALL<br>6-9 PM RUN SHOW<br>5 | 5:30 FENCERS CALL<br>6-9 PM RUN SHOW<br>6 | 6-9 PM OPEN FORUM<br>7 | 3PM CALL RUN SHOW<br>8 | 5:30 CALL<br>6-9 PM RUN SHOW<br>9 | 9 AM-4 PM TECH WORK (SHS)<br>10 | 1 PM DRY TECH (SHS)<br>11 |
| 5:30 PM FENCER'S CALL<br>6:00 PM CAST CALL<br>12 | 5:30 FENCER'S CALL<br>6:00 CAST CALL<br>13 | OPENING NIGHT<br>14 | PERFORMANCE<br>15 | PERFORMANCE<br>16 | PERFORMANCE<br>STRIKE SET (SHS)<br>17 | 18 |
| 5:30 FENCER'S CALL<br>6-9 P.M. CUE TO CUE TECH (AHS)<br>19 | 5:30 FENCER'S CALL<br>6:00 CAST CALL<br>20 | 5:30 FENCER'S CALL<br>6:00 CAST CALL<br>21 FINAL | OPENING NIGHT (AHS)<br>22 | PERFORMANCE (AHS)<br>23 | PERFORMANCE (AHS)<br>STRIKE SET<br>24 (AHS) | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

# February 1990

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6-9 P.M. WORK/RUN ACT IV<br>1 | 6-9 P.M. OPEN FORUM<br>2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6-7 P.M. FENCERS<br>6-9 P.M. WORK MONOLOGUES AND<br>5 | 6-9 P.M. WORK PROBLEM SCENES<br>ACTS IV AND V<br>6 | 6-7 P.M. FENCERS<br>7-9- P.M. WORK/RUN ACT V<br>7 | 6-9 P.M. WORK MONOLOGUES SOLILOQUIES AND SCENES<br>8 | 6-9 P.M. OPEN FORUM<br>9 | 10 | 11 |
| 6-7.P.M. FENCERS<br>7-9 P.M. WORK/RUN ACT II<br>12 | 7-9 P.M. MONOLOGUES/ CHORUS<br>13 | 6-7 P.M. FENCERS<br>7-9 P.M. WORK/RUN ACT I<br>14 | 6-9 P.M. WORK/RUN ACT II<br>15 | 6-9 P.M. OPEN FORUM<br>16 | 17 | 18 |
| HOLIDAY<br>2-4:30 P.M. RUN ACTSIII,IV,V<br>6-7 P.M. FENCERS<br>19 | TBA PROBLEM SCENES<br>20 | 6-7 P.M. FENCERS<br>7-9 P.M. RUN ACT II<br>21 | 6-9 P.M. RUN ACT III<br>22 | 6-9 P.M. OPEN FORUM<br>23 | 9-11 A.M. FENCERS<br>24 | 25 |
| 6-7 P.M. FENCERS<br>6-8 P.M. COSTUME PARADE<br>26 | 6-9 P.M. TECH WORK NIGHT (SCENERY)<br>27 | 5:30 FENCERS CALL<br>6-9 P.M. RUN SHOW<br>28 | | | | |

# January 1990

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 6-10 P.M.<br>READ-THRU<br>4 | 6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>I,2; I,4<br>5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5:30-8:00 P.M.<br>FENCING<br>6:00-9:00 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>8 I,3; II,2 | **6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>II,3; II,6**<br>9 | 6-8 P.M.<br>FENCING<br>6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>10 III,5; II,5 | 6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>I,1; 1,5<br>11 | 6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>PROLOGUE<br>12 | 13 | 14 |
| HOLIDAY<br>6-8 P.M.<br>FENCERS<br>6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>15 | 6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>V,I; III,4; IV 4<br>16 | 6-8 P.M.<br>FENCERS<br>6-9 P.M.<br>PROBLEM<br>17 SCENES | NO REHEARSAL<br>THEATRE<br>FESTIVAL<br>18 | NO REHEARSAL<br>THEATRE<br>FESTIVAL<br>19 | THEATRE<br>FESTIVAL<br>20 | 21 |
| 6-7 P.M.<br>FENCERS<br>6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>22 | 6-9 P.M.<br>RUN-ACT II<br>PROBLEM<br>SCENES<br>23 | 6-7P.M.<br>FENCERS<br>6-9<br>P.M.BLOCKING<br>24 | 6-9 P.M.<br>WORK/RUN<br>ACT II<br>25 | OPEN FORUM<br>26 | 27 | 28 |
| 6-7 P.M.<br>FENCERS/PROB<br>LEM<br>SCENES<br>29 7-9 P.M. | 6-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>IV,1; IV,2;<br>IV,5<br>30 | 6-7 P.M.<br>FENCERS<br>7-9 P.M.<br>BLOCKING<br>31 V,3 | | | | |